

City of Fairfax Emergency Preparedness

A Town Hall Meeting

Overview of the City of Fairfax Emergency Preparedness Planning and Response Process

October 25, 2005

City of Fairfax Emergency Preparedness

AGENDA

- Summary of the emergency preparedness process.
- Relationship between Local governments, State government and Federal government in emergency preparedness and response.
- Northern Virginia and Metropolitan Washington as a region.
- How the disaster response system works
- Hurricane Isabel – Response and lessons learned
- Improve response assets
- Personal preparedness
- Continuing Challenges

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Emergency Planning Process

- Federal Government Requires States to develop and implement a statewide all hazards Emergency Operations Plan that complies with the requirements of the Federal Plan.
- States require local governments to develop and implement a local all hazards Emergency Operations Plan that complies with the requirements of the State plan.

Regional Influence

The City's size and geographic location requires that we fully participate in a regional emergency planning process.

While our local plan provides the framework for managing an isolated event, large scale disaster response and recovery must be planned for and managed at a regional level.

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Emergency preparedness and response planning is regional within Northern Virginia.

Two primary coordinating bodies:

- **COG – Emergency Planning for the National Capitol Region is done through multi-disciplinary / multi-jurisdictional committees**
- **Northern Virginia Regional Commission – Emergency Planning specific to Northern Virginia is done through multi-disciplinary committees.**



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City of Fairfax Emergency Operations Plan – Basic all hazards disaster response plan specific to the City of Fairfax – connected to State plan.

Virginia Emergency Operations Plan – Includes the State basic all hazards plan and annexes for specific events such as Radiological emergencies, Hurricanes, Hazardous Materials, Terrorism Consequence Management, Disaster Recovery.

LEPC Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Plan – Regional Hazardous Materials Response Plan covering Fairfax City, Fairfax County, Herndon and Vienna.

Virginia Department of Health Strategic National Stockpile Plan – Plan for managing the distribution of pharmaceuticals from the Strategic National Stockpile in the event of a biological incident.

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Mutual Aid Operations Plan – Public safety mutual aid plan for the COG region.

Metropolitan Medical Response System – Response system for large scale mass casualty events related to chemical or biological incidents.

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All Emergencies
Are Local Events

- Initial response by local government sets into motion the response strategy and the build-up of response resources. Locals request aid through the State.

City Resources
&
Mutual Aid

State
Resources

Federal
Resources

- State emergency response agencies use historical experience to “pre-deploy” likely assets needed and react to specific requests for assistance from local governments.

- Federal emergency response agencies “pre-deploy” and react to specific needs requested by the State.

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EXAMPLE: Response to Hurricane Isabel: **Storm Preparations**

- City begins monitoring storm forecast days in advance.
- City participates in conference calls with Virginia Emergency Management and National Weather Service to stay updated on the storm's potential impact.
- All City agencies alerted to begin storm preparations when forecast impact confidence is high.
- City Manager and Department Heads meet for storm briefing and response planning based upon forecast scenario.
- Each City agency places essential personnel on-call.
- City Disaster Operation Center prepared and staffed.
- Mayor and City Council briefed on storm potential and City's state of response preparedness.
- Regional conference calls occur between jurisdictions to discuss storm preparations on a regional level.

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EXAMPLE: Response to Hurricane Isabel:

Storm Response

- During the storm, City officials staff the Disaster Operations Center where they assess storm impact and direct the City's response agencies.
- Fire, Police, Public Works, Utilities and Parks & Recreation staff respond to storm related events with a primary mission of protecting the safety and welfare of our citizens and maintaining essential services.
- City officials assess storm consequences and begin to mobilize recovery resources.
- Requests are made through the State Emergency Operations Center for large quantities of dry ice to be sent into the city for distribution. This request is relayed to FEMA.
- Emergency shelters are coordinated with Fairfax County.
- City officials communicate directly with Virginia Power regarding power outage issues and repair status.
- Various methods are used to provide emergency information to the public.
- Damage assessment teams are sent into the neighborhoods.

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Hurricane Isabel – Lessons Learned and Follow-up

- **City's Disaster Operations Center needs improvement** – A new DOC is designed into the new police services building currently under construction.
- **Traffic Signals at key intersections need a back-up power source** – Portable generators have been acquired and key traffic signals are wired to run off of emergency generator power.
- **The City needs to increase the call capacity of its Reverse 911 telephone system** – System has been upgraded with additional phone lines to increase calling capacity.
- **City Information Technology Center needs a dedicated back-up power supply** – City has procured and installed a back-up generator for the IT department to keep City systems operational during power outage.
- **The City needs a method to determine citizens who have special needs during an emergency** – The fire department has established a “special needs registry”. Citizens should contact the Fire Department to make sure we are aware of your special needs family member.... 703-385-7940

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Hurricane Isabel – Lessons Learned and Follow-up

- **The City needs the ability to provide emergency public information via AM radio** – We currently have access to the AM radio station at George Mason University and we are planning to establish our own AM radio broadcast transmitter at the new Disaster Operations Center.



- **The City needs a method to send mass email and text notifications to residents and businesses** – A new electronic Message Alert System (eMAS) has been implemented. This is a free service that residents and businesses can register for to have text messages sent directly to email, pagers, cellphones, etc. There are currently 1,186 eMAS subscribers.

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The City has improved its specialized resources as part of a regional upgrade in response capability:



Mobile Command and Communications Unit



Incident Support Unit for Chemical Decontamination



Level 2 Mass Casualty Supply Unit - medical equipment and supplies to treat 50 patients



Traffic Signal Control Center

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Personal Preparedness: What YOU need to do

Every family needs to be prepared to provide for their basic human needs for the first 48 – 72 hours after a catastrophic event.

- Drinking Water – 1 gallon per person – per day minimum
- Non-perishable food - manual can opener - disposable plates/Utensils
- Prescription medications
- Battery powered radio and extra batteries
- Flashlights and extra batteries (Do NOT use candles)
- A non-electric powered telephone
- Toiletries
- Cash or Travelers Checks
- 2 changes of clothes
- Bedding
- Important Documents – create a “GO” kit.

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Personal Preparedness: What YOU need to do

Every family needs to be prepared to provide for their basic human needs for the first 48 – 72 hours after a catastrophic event.

- Establish a Family Emergency Plan.
- Provide each family member with a Z-Card that contains the details of your personal emergency plan.
- Keep an inventory of your property – Photo / Video Record and keep in your Important Records “GO Kit”
- Sign up for the City of Fairfax electronic message alert system through the city webpage – www.fairfaxva.gov
- Register your family members who have special needs by calling the City of Fairfax Fire Department at 703-385-7940.

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Emergency Preparedness Challenges:

We must stay engaged in the regional emergency preparedness planning process:

- **There are many planning activities underway or in the pipeline at the State, regional Council of Governments and regional Northern Virginia levels.**

We must make better use of available technology to support command and control emergency operations and regional coordination:

- **The Disaster Operations Center must be equipped with state-of-the-art communications and computer software programs that can be linked with our neighbors during significant events.**
- **Several of these upgrades are being federally funded for the City.**

We must make public education for emergency preparedness a priority:

- **We must “reach out” into the community to provide guidance to our citizens and businesses regarding their personal preparedness.**

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Emergency Preparedness Challenges:

Emergency management mandates continue to increase and we are falling behind due to a lack of dedicated staff support for this function.

- Emergency planning requirements becoming more involved as federal and state mandates are handed down.
- Emergency management grants are requiring more administrative time.
- Emergency management threat and vulnerability assessments are now ongoing activities.
- Increased requirement for participation in emergency management meetings at local, regional and state level.
- Increased requirements for training of city staff.
- Increased requirements for exercises and disaster drills.
- Personal preparedness outreach needs to be increased.

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THANK YOU

Emergency preparedness resources available at:

City of Fairfax website.

www.fairfaxva.gov

Other web resources:

www.ready.gov

www.redcross.org

www.makeaplan.org

City Staff Contacts:

Tom Owens, Fire Chief – 703-385-7940

Rick Rappoport, Police Chief – 703-385-7960

Bob Sisson, City Manager – 703-385-7850

Please help yourself to Z-Cards